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TAGS: [EAID](#) [EAGR](#) [AORC](#) [PREF](#) [WFP](#) [UN](#)
SUBJECT: WFP EXECUTIVE BOARD APPROVES WEST AFRICA
COASTAL PROTRACTED RELIEF AND RECOVERY OPERATION FOR
2004

Ref: Rome 4996

Summary

1. The U.S. Delegation (USDEL) provided a number of comments to the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) regarding its new Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) for West Africa during WFP's Executive Board (EB) meeting the week of October 20. The USDEL expressed support for the activation of the contingency measure to cover the current food needs in Liberia, disappointment that the longer-term refugees in the camps in Guinea who had been able to engage in farming or income-generating activities continued to receive full rations, support for use of land transport, shipping and handling (LTSH) funds to cover post-distribution monitoring costs, and concern over reported malnutrition rates in the refugee camps in Sierra Leone. USDEL's concerns in Guinea and Sierra Leone are being addressed by the WFP country representatives. WFP's regional director was very pleased with the USDEL proposal regarding the use of LTSH funds for post-distribution monitoring. He is quite optimistic about the future of Liberia, but quite pessimistic about Cote d'Ivoire. End Summary.

Background

2. The current PRRO for the West Africa Coastal region began on January 1, 2003, and ends with this calendar year. The new PRRO is for one year and begins January 1, 2004. The PRRO covers three countries, accompanied by the following beneficiary numbers: Sierra Leone (275,000), Liberia (454,400), and Guinea (172,700). Note: Last year, Cote d'Ivoire (CI) was added to the PRRO because of the number of Liberian refugees in CI. During the year, however, the caseload of refugees inside CI was transferred to the new WFP Emergency Operation (EMOP) for CI. End Note.

3. Because PRRO documents are prepared four to five months in advance of their presentation at the EB meetings, the summer's events in Liberia were not included in the project document. WFP distributed an addendum during the EB that provided an update of the current situation in Liberia. WFP's regional director, Manuel Aranda da Silva, requested that the EB immediately approve activating the contingency measure in the PRRO to accommodate an additional 150,000 beneficiaries in Liberia, which currently is sufficient to address the increased needs in Liberia and is included in the 454,400 number give above.

WFP Executive Board Presentation

4. The U.S. delegation made the following comments to WFP during its Executive Board meeting.

A. We congratulate WFP on its current work in Liberia. Although we had trouble getting timely information at the beginning of the re-entry operation, that element,

as well as others, has greatly improved.

1B. The USDEL is pleased to learn that the contingency measure in the new PRRO is sufficient in addressing the current needs in Liberia. This reflects good planning.

1C. We are very supportive of the continued emphasis on women in the PRRO and the safeguards needed to ensure that sexual abuse of beneficiaries is not tolerated. Constant vigilance is indeed required.

1D. We are disappointed to see that only in 2004 is WFP planning to reduce the ration size in the refugee camps in Guinea, and only in Kola Camp. It was our understanding that this was to begin in 2003 because of the extensive farming that the refugees had achieved in 2002 and 2003 in the Albadariah camps in Kissidougou, as well as in other camps, such as Kola. We had hoped that all camps would be periodically assessed to review the refugees' status of self-reliance, which would include benefiting from one successful cultivation season or from other income-generating activities and reviewing the refugees' nutritional status. We strongly encourage WFP and UNHCR to monitor such progress systematically in the camps so that refugees can enjoy the feeling of some self-sufficiency. If ration cuts are implemented, we would expect that WFP would have in place sufficient mechanisms to ensure that food-insecure refugees continue to receive adequate assistance.

1E. We also thought that emergency school feeding in the Guinea refugee camps was to be introduced during 2003 that would coincide with a reduction of the general ration. We truly hope this can take place in 2004. We are pleased to see that the surrounding communities in Guinea will also be targeted for emergency school feeding. And we add that school feeding in the fragile districts of Kono and Kailahun in Sierra Leone and now in Liberia is extremely important.

1F. We fully support WFP's post-distribution monitoring (PDM) efforts under the PRRO and would like to see WFP using land transport, shipping and handling (LTSH) funds to ensure that PDM takes place.

1G. We take note of the rates of malnutrition in the refugee camps in Sierra Leone, and have also heard reports of rates of malnutrition increasing among the returnees coming from Guinea resettling in Sierra Leone. We urge WFP and UNHCR to take serious steps to address these issues.

1H. We take note of WFP's efforts in Sierra Leone to closely link the rehabilitation efforts to the longer-

1I. We once again this year want to emphasize the important roles that UNHCR and FAO play in regards to food security. We ask that UNHCR ensure that non-food items (NFIs) are being provided in the refugee camps, so that high-valued food commodities are not bartered for NFIs and that FAO continue its agricultural support to the refugees and internally displaced so they are not completely reliant on food aid and can achieve some degree of self-sufficiency for their own self-esteem.

1J. USDEL recommends approval of the West Africa Coastal PRRO with noted comments

WFP's responses

15. WFP made the following responses to the USDEL intervention:

1A. Aranda da Silva said WFP was committed to maintaining its focus on women and continuing its vigilance in safeguarding against sexual exploitation possibilities.

1B. Arnada da Silva also said he was pleased with the USDEL proposal to use LTSH funds to cover PDM costs. He believes PDM to be an important investment and one that yields high returns.

1C. Note: In a follow-on meeting the next day, WFP and the USDEL further discussed this proposal of using LTSH funds for PDM. USDEL clearly stated that it firmly supported the use of LTSH funds to cover PDM costs and pointed to the language in the Guidelines for LTSH Guidelines for P.L. 480, Title II emergency commodities that allow the expense. Aranda da Silva added that the European Community is also very supportive of using LTSH funds to support PDM. WFP agreed to pursue the issue internally, but this may require pushing from the USG. PDM costs now are either covered by UNHCR in a refugee

setting or by another donor, usually USAID/OFDA or ECHO, for internally displaced persons (IDPs). End Note.

1D. Stefano Porretti, the new WFP country representative in Guinea, addressed the points concerning the refugees in Guinea. He said that he and the new UNHCR country representative had conducted a joint mission to the refugee camps in eastern Guinea in September, and they agreed that a downsizing of the ration is warranted in some camps. They are in the process of establishing a task force to focus on the issue. It is WFP's and UNHCR's goal to effect a reduction in the ration by the end of this year and put into place other activities of self-reliance. He also mentioned that FAO had provided the seeds (with State/PRM funding) and the Government of RBONCEY, Guinea had provided the land in some of the camps.

1E. Porretti also remarked that WFP and UNHCR hoped to soon initiate support of income generating activities targeting women.

1F. Porretti confirmed the importance of ensuring that the local population surrounding the refugee camps was not forgotten when providing for the refugees.

1G. Louis Imbleau, the WFP country representative in Sierra Leone, said malnutrition problems were identified in July and August. UNHCR and WFP with their implementing partners, Medecins Sans Frontieres and Merlin, are now performing nutritional screening in the way stations and in the camps. WFP supports the supplementary and therapeutic feeding centers with food. During September and October, a nutritional survey was conducted in all the camps, reported Imbleau, and the results will be out soon.

Parting Shots

16. Aranda da Silva added that the timespan for this PRRO has remained one year due to the very fluid nature of the region. Next year, he said, the landscape may be quite different. He said he feels that we, the international community, have turned the page in Liberia and that Liberia will be one of the most stable countries in the region in two years. Being a Mozambican and having experienced the civil war in his country, Aranda da Silva said that the hope for change in Liberia is immense and that hope can have profound effects on the population. In contrast, he said we have not yet opened the book on Cote d'Ivoire. He and his staff are quite concerned about the future in Cote d'Ivoire.

17. WFP's Executive Director Morris added that responding to the crisis in Liberia, with its waves of serious security problems for the UN staff, is "as difficult a situation in Africa in which WFP has had to work in a long time." Hall

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